

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 05350 081822 Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 GAC-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00

MBFR-03 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 ACDA-19 AEC-11 OMB-01

RSR-01 /137 W

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R 081756 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1014

INFO DOD WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

UNCLAS LONDON 05350

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MCAP, MOPS, XG

SUBJ: BRITISH PRESS ON MINI- NUKES

REF: LONDON 5248

1. DAILY TELEGRAPH AND GUARDIAN BOTH REACTED MAY 8 TO TIMES STORY ON MINI- NUKES (REFTEL). BRIGADIER THOMPSON, TELEGRAPH' S DEFENSE CORRESPONDENT, SAYS SUCH WEAPONS COULD MAKE UP FOR NATO' S SHORTAGE OF CONVENTIONAL ARTILLERY AND, PROVIDED THEIR USE ASSURED FROM BEGINNING, COULD ENABLE CREDIBLE PLANS FOR DEFENSE TO BE BASED UPON NATO' S PRESENT CONVENTIONAL FORCES. THEY COULD NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR NUCLEAR ATTACK ON WARSAW PACTS LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS. IF THEY WERE WIDELY DISTRIBUTED AMONG NATO FORCES AND CONTROL DECENTRALIZED TO CORPS COMMANDERS, THEY WOULD STRENGTHEN THE DETERRENT. BUT THEIR INTRODUCTION IS STILL AT LEAST FIVE YEARS OFF, AND MOST LIKELY RUSSIA HAS SIMILAR PROGRAM UNDER DEVELOPMENT.

2. GUARDIAN HAS EVEN GREATER RESERVATIONS, REPORTING THAT IDEA
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PAGE 02 LONDON 05350 081822 Z

MINI- NUKES COULD OFFSET NATO' S OF MANPOWER WITHIN FIVE YEARS
WAS " CAUTIOUSLY DISMISSED " IN BRITISH DEFENSE CIRCLES YESTER-
DAY. GUARDIAN SAYS US SOURCES CLAIM SUCH WEAPONS " A VERY, VERY
LONG WAY AWAY", AND TOP BRITISH SCIENTIST DISMISSED " CLEAN"
NUCLEAR ARMS AS NONSENSE. GUARDIAN SUPPORTS ITS SKEPTICISM
WITH QUOTES FROM FORMER DEPUTY SECDEF PACKARD AT RECENT CONFERE-
XED AS A FUNCTION OF THE DATE WHEN THE THREE VERSIONS WILL BE
AVAILABLE (I. E. THE DATE OF DISTRIBUTION OF THE TRANSLATIONS).

" A POSSIBLE DATE FOR CONSIDERING THE REPORT IN COUNCIL WOULD
BE TEN DAYS AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TRANSLATIONS, WHICH
WOULD MEAN A COUNCIL MEETING ON 24 OR 25 MAY. I NEED TO KNOW AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE THE DATE OF THE COUNCIL MEETING, SINCE I HAVE
TO ADVISE THE NON- COUNCIL MEMBER STATES INVOLVED, IN CASE THEY
WISH TO BE REPRESENTED AS PROVIDED IN ARTICLE 53 OF THE CONVEN-
TION.

" I SHOULD APPRECIATE IT IF ANY REPRESENTATIVE WHO MAY HAVE
DIFFICULTIES WITH THE DATES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING MENTIONED
ABOVE WOULD SO INFORM ME BEFORE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON THURSDAY,
10 MAY.

WALTER BINAGHI. END QUOTE.
TOPPING

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